

## EQUIPMENT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

The FRRS has enacted an Equipment Sponsor Program to support the preservation of our historic collection. This unique program gives businesses and individuals a chance to participate in the on-going mission of the Society. Historic pieces and structures in the museum collection can be sponsored by businesses, individuals and / or groups, providing support for their restoration and preservation.

Sponsorship consists of an initial donation, then yearly donations of a lower amount. Sponsorship does not preclude additional fundraising for a piece of equipment if needed for advanced restoration work.

Sponsor levels depend on the needed degree of care, difficulty of care, historic significance of the piece and other factors. At least 60% of sponsorship donation must be applied to the sponsored piece. 40% will be used at the discretion of the Society, but priority is given to needed care of the sponsored piece.

Each sponsored piece, if needed, will get, by its fourth year in the program, a complete paint job (including needed cosmetic repairs). The only exception will be pieces that are undergoing an active restoration. These will get cosmetic work in coordination with the restoration. Pieces will receive informational plaques featuring the name of the sponsoring individuals and / or groups. In return, sponsors shall receive a plaque they can display showcasing their sponsored piece, invitations for their employees or friends to attend WPRM events and coupons good for discounts on train rides and Run A Locomotive plans to be given to their employees or friends, or other suitable gifts, depending on the sponsorship level.

Sponsored pieces will be eligible for use, if operational, in any service required by the WPRM and will only be limited by mechanical condition / suitability or issues relating to age and other historic considerations.

Featured items available for sponsorship include WP California Zephyr locomotive 805-A, UP Centennial locomotive 6936, WP SW1 501 (the railroad's first diesel), WP 0-6-0 steam switcher 165 and the proposed Whitman Display Building.

A complete list of all equipment and facility structures in the program is available upon request. For more information, please contact the Society by email at [info@WPLives.org](mailto:info@WPLives.org) or by phone at 530.832.4131.

## WP HOSPITAL ARSON FIRE

The Feather River Rail Society suffered a huge loss on the morning of September 7th at 1am when the fire department was called for a fire at the old WP Hospital site in Portola, CA. Upon arrival of the first responding units they found the structure fully involved in fire. Although efforts were made to save some of the structure these efforts were in vain. The building was a total loss.

The WP Hospital in Portola was the only such facility in the U.S. known to be owned by a preservation group. There are only a few railroad hospitals left nationwide, and most have either been reconfigured for other institutional uses, or sit in a state of disuse and uncertainty.

The railroad hospital system itself is a fascinating story, one we had hoped to showcase with the WP Hospital. It was the precursor to our modern health care system and gave birth to the field of occupational medicine. The WP Hospital, in particular, not only served the people and families of Western Pacific employees in Portola and Eastern Plumas County, but also served as the community hospital for the public until the 1960s. There are many people living in and near Portola today (and elsewhere) who were born there. One of the most interesting stories in the hospital's history was that it was the location for the first clinical use of Penicillin for treating gangrene which occurred in 1943.

The cause of the blaze was suspected as arson early on and an investigation led to the arrest of 18 year old Harold Ellis Johnson of Portola on September 15, 2011 by the Plumas County Sheriff's Office. After his arrest, Johnson reportedly admitted starting the hospital fire as well as a fire the next night at the Feather River Middle School. He said he acted alone.

On December 1, the hospital arsonist was sentenced to one year in the county jail and five years of formal probation. He must also register as an arson offender, pay appropriate restitution and undergo counseling as directed by the probation department. The felony arson conviction is considered a "serious" felony and constitutes a strike under the state's three-strikes law. Costs to clear the destroyed structure and make the area safe have reached nearly \$50,000.

The FRRS wishes to extend its thanks to the firefighters who bravely fought what was a large and dangerous blaze, as well as the Sheriff's Department and the Plumas County Prosecutor's Officer for their fine work.